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REVIEWS

Cuentos y Lecturas en Castellano, by María Solano. Silver, Burdett and Company, Boston, 1921, x + 158 pp.

In the preface Miss Solano informs us that this reader is meant for beginners either in the junior or in the regular high school; that all the lessons have actually been tried out in classes in typewritten form; that the aim has been to provide a small, easy, carefully graded reader that may be finished in a year or less; that all difficult idioms, subjunctive, *tú* and *vosotros* have been omitted; that much verb drill has been included; that with trifling exceptions the book is entirely in Spanish; and that no effort has been spared to make the scenes real. The author herself wrote the selections.

Careful reading of Miss Solano's reader shows that the purposes described in the preface have been well carried out. There is almost nothing in the reader to arouse adverse criticism. The selections are simple, short and well planned. Various imaginative pieces are followed by descriptions of meals, natural phenomena, the school, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, life in Spain, a journey from Spain to South America, and some fables. All the material is treated from the standpoint of the young. There is no more artificiality than is inevitable in a reader prepared for school purposes. One of the very few statements that seem unwise is to the effect that the climate of Montevideo is cooler than Buenos Aires, partly because it is a more southern city. The difference in latitude is hardly great enough to produce noticeable effect.

The reader has appropriate maps, songs and pictures. The lines should be numbered. On page 104, line 19, read *lo* for *los*. The exercises are based chiefly upon the need for verb drill, and are sufficiently searching for the purpose, while not so long as to cause delay or discouragement. The reviewer congratulates Miss Solano for having brought out so excellent a book. Doubtless one reason for success is the plan of using passages in class before printing them. Miss Solano's reader can be recommended without reservation for use by students in the junior high school or the regular high school.

Primeras Lecturas en Español, by Carolina Marcial Dorado. Ginn and Company, Boston, 1920, xi + 225 pages.

This book is offered as a first reader. The author has aimed to use simple idioms, but to give the text a genuinely Spanish local color. For this reason she has chosen her material from Spanish customs, character, ideals, and folklore. She has also varied the reading material by the use of dialogue, narrative, anecdotes, verse, and three one-act plays. Space is reserved for exercises and songs. In the absence of definite information it is to be assumed that most of the material was composed or recast by the author.

The material consists of a series of chapters that deal with Spanish names, Spanish houses, customs and holidays, historical events, important historical figures, and Spanish America. There are several short stories and plays. Poems, proverbs and anecdotes are inserted in various places. On the whole, the Spanish is interesting to read, and gives information about Spain and the

Spaniards. There is some artificiality, as is inevitable in a reader composed solely for use in class. There appears to be a contradiction on pages 50 and 54 as to Cervantes's knowledge of Italian. Accounts of historical events and personages are written in the simple style adopted all over the world for the description of national heroes. Miss Marcial Dorado's book presents more interesting matter than most first readers of the modern type. Throughout an effort is made to adopt the young person's point of view. To offset these advantages the reader is harder than the majority of its contemporaries. It can be used to advantage with a good class. The vocabulary is rather large.

To the text is appended a set of exercises which offer an extensive grammar review. Questions to be answered, blanks to fill, changes in tense, person, number, etc., practice in numerals, and other devices afford ample material for drill work.

The reader has attractive maps and pictures and is carefully printed. The only misprints noted of any consequence are close together, on pages 85 and 87, where we find *estreché*, apparently for *estrechó*, *valiento* for *valiente* and *huerfano* for *huérfano*.

Serious objection may be made to the vocabulary, which is defective in several respects. Especially have the proper names been neglected. The student will look in vain for *Marruecos*, *Argel*, *Borbón*, *Gantes*, and other names. Some words do not have the exact meaning in the vocabulary; examples are *soñar*, page 42, *dominar*, page 48, *coloso*, page 69, *dormir*, page 72, etc. The first meaning given for *vacuno* is not idiomatic English. A number of phrases (e. g. *jugar al toro*, *salón de actos* and *hablar de tú*, etc.) are not translated. The actual omission of separate words is also not infrequent. Among those noticed are *cochecito*, page 29, *pitir*, page 64, *trepitar*, page 67, *faldita*, page 67, *lobo (de mar)*, page 78, *clarísimo*, page 82, *torerito*, page 90, *perdis*, page 123, and several words on page 65. In fact, the story *La faldita roja*, on pages 63 to 68, has not so complete a vocabulary as other sections of the reader.

The vocabulary of *Primeras Lecturas en Español* should be revised. When that is done the reader can be recommended heartily for use in a junior or senior high school, either as a first book or immediately after a short reader.

First Spanish Reader, with grammatical and conversational exercises, by Aurelio M. Espinosa. Benj. H. Sanborn and Company, Boston, 1920, xiii + 265 pp.

The principles that underlie the composition of this reader are explained in the preface, where we find that nearly all the material is from the author's own hand; that the reader is intended to be a reading and conversation book for pupils who begin Spanish in the eighth or ninth grade; that Spanish must be treated as a living language to secure good results; that, despite systematic drill in grammar, the book is not intended to be both reader and grammar, but only auxiliary to a good grammar. Professor Espinosa offers six suggestions, summarized as follows: (1) Spanish should be the language of the classroom; (2) grammar reviews and verb drills should be carefully done; (3) the Spanish of texts and exercises should be carefully pronounced by the pupils; (4) complete answers should be given to the Spanish questions and

pupils should be encouraged to ask original questions; (5) the exercises at the end of each lesson should be most carefully prepared; (6) frequent oral *resúmenes* should be required.

The reader is divided into two parts, of which the first is extremely simple. Actual reading matter, slight in extent, deals with familiar things such as the classroom, days of the week, months, seasons, meals, purchases, etc. There are also sections devoted to grammatical terminology, classroom expressions, grammar lessons, coins, riddles, and popular verse, including some attention to the rudiments of metrics.

The second part contains more extensive selections for reading. The topics treated are associated with the history, geography, literature and life of the United States, and certain Spanish-American countries. There is a chapter on the subjunctive, and also some selections from Spanish authors. On the whole the material is very simple, as it should be, and for the most part, quite readable.

The great feature of the *First Spanish Reader* is the drill work. Exercises are abundant in each lesson. In fact, they are so numerous that one wonders at times whether it is possible to go over them all as carefully as Professor Espinosa recommends in the preface.

Notable is the drill on verbs. No occasion is lost to insist on practice and repeated practice in all the common forms and uses of the verb. Other important matters, such as pronouns and prepositions, receive considerable attention. The exercises offer a drill in grammar so thorough and systematic as to furnish a valuable adjunct to the grammar regularly used in class. Various devices are employed, such as synopses, conjugation, change of number, identification of tense forms, the filling of blanks, and so on. The Spanish questions based on the text are often very numerous, perhaps too numerous to allow time for original questions on the part of teacher or pupils. The almost uniform excellence of the Spanish questions is occasionally marred by undue length or difficulty, as in lessons XX and XXI. There is an attempt to stimulate *resúmenes* or free composition.

There is an appendix on verbs and an excellent vocabulary. The book is well printed and has appropriate illustrations and maps. Only a few misprints have been noted. Curious is the use of *Atlántico* instead of *Pacífico* on page 92, and *uno* for *un* on page 58.

Professor Espinosa's *First Spanish Book* can be recommended unreservedly for young pupils. Simplicity of reading material and searching drill, especially on the verb, are its outstanding characteristics. The reviewer agrees with the principles of the author, except in so far as it seems that thorough attention to all the exercises will result in spending too much time on the first reader. The teacher may omit or shorten exercises here and there without losing the benefit of the drill work.

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